

OPEN SPACE Draft Element – Packet #2

Updated April 28, 2011

To: CAC Members and Alternates

From: Staff

Date: April 1, 2011

Re: Open Space Element

ASSIGNMENT:

Please find attached the Updated DRAFT “Open Space Element” with proposed Goal and Policies.

- I. Note that suggestions for text changes are inserted within this document. **Updates and additions since the April 7th CAC Meeting are noted in RED.**
- II. Updated “Proposed Goal and Policies” including those approved by the CAC thus far (Goal and Policy 1.1) are included.
- III. Please read THIS DOCUMENT – ‘OPEN SPACE DRAFT ELEMENT’ again to make sure you have the background data, tools, and information to continue discussing the remainder of the policies.

We will continue this review at the May 5, 2011 CAC Meeting.

Thank you!

Kimberly Sharp, AICP
Community & Neighborhood Planner
City of Flagstaff
211 W Aspen Avenue
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

Open Space Element

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Relationship to Vision and Guiding Principles
3. Open Space History, Coordinated Planning and Tools
4. Rural Open Space
5. Urban Open Space
6. Goals, Policies and Strategies
7. Stakeholders & Implementation

1. Introduction

To many Flagstaff area residents, Open Space is a defining feature of Flagstaff's character and attraction. Open Space defines the region's quality of life, protects the environmental quality and biodiversity health, supports future economic impact and helps to protect historic and cultural resources. Open Space functions as a land resource, recreational destination, and a transportation corridor. It also serves an important function in development by providing a system of control over development patterns. The area encompassed by the *Regional Plan* holds an enormously diverse and fascinating variety of open space lands from high-elevation wetland meadows to regionally significant geologic formations. Planning for open space can ensure preservation of these important resources.

Open Space plans address the first and most important determinant of a *Regional Plan*—where open space should be preserved thus defining where sustainable urban expansion can occur. Two open space plans have been developed for the Flagstaff region, the Rural Open Spaces Plan (*map xx*), and the Urban Open Spaces Plan (*map xx*). The *Regional Plan* incorporates the relevant goals and objectives of these plans in order to develop a consistent, integrated and balanced open space and trails system. Being surrounded by federal lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, the Flagstaff Region is developable yet land-constrained due to a small percentage of private lands available for development. Future plans for development are based on balancing preservation of important Open Space lands for use as wildlife corridors and riparian waterways, while allowing appropriate urban development to occur that takes into account these significant environmental factors and resources.

This 'open space element' required by Arizona Revised Statutes is to include a) a comprehensive inventory of open space areas, recreational resources and designated points of access to open space areas and resources; b) An analysis of forecasted needs, policies for managing and protecting open space areas and resources and implementation strategies to acquire additional open space areas and further establish recreational resources; and c) Policies and implementation strategies designed to promote a regional system of integrated open space and recreational resources and consideration of any existing regional open space plans.

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2. Relationship to Vision and Guiding Principles

Open Space preservation is consistent with the adopted Guiding Principles, especially pertaining to sustainability, healthy ecosystems, smart growth and quality development, a vibrant and resilient economy, sense of place and community character, and partnerships. The long-term health and viability of our open spaces natural landscapes is essential to achieving the future envisioned by this plan. When planning for the region, the community must indicate the ‘green infrastructure’ first, and then weave the urban fabric around and through this.

Open Space lands are a complex mosaic of undeveloped or minimally developed¹ lands with a wide variety of qualities, values and purposes affecting all other elements of the Regional Plan.

Open Space may protect:

- Ecological networks
- Wildlife habitats and corridors
- Riparian areas and wetlands
- Historical, cultural and archeological sites

Open Space may offer:

- Scenery
- Opportunities for outdoor enjoyment and passive recreation, including but not limited to fishing, picnicking, hiking and wildlife watching
- Sustainable agriculture

Open Space may serve as:

- Linkages between features
- Buffer for neighborhoods and highways
- Buffers for areas of high cultural and ecological value
- Spatial definition of urban areas

The Regional Plan identifies open space lands for current and future public or permitted private use and specifies tools to acquire and conserve open space.

3. Open Space History, Coordinated Planning and Tools

Open space has been defined and promoted as a community-wide priority from Vision 2020 (1997), the main impetus for the Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan (1998), as well as public policies implemented through the Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan (2001). A number of preservation and acquisition efforts have culminated in thousands of acres being put into open space conservation. The following plans and implementation tools highlight an inter-agency institutional framework already at work in environmental and open space planning efforts. This inter-agency framework includes the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Arizona Game and Fish, Arizona State Land Department, US Fish and Wildlife Services, US Forest Service, National Park Service as well as Lowell and the Naval Observatories and Camp Navajo. Future open space planning would benefit from a specific collaborative effort with these agencies along with non-governmental groups to determine open space for acquisition and management.

There are many local, state and federal initiatives working concurrently to protect and preserve open space, such as the City of Flagstaff and Coconino County’s open space acquisition programs, the

¹ Minimally developed as appropriate for a particular area, such as trails, trail heads, signage and picnic shelter / ramada.

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Arizona Preserve Initiative, Federal and State wildlife protection programs and a growing use of land protection incentives, such as conservation easements. Residents of the Flagstaff Region have a history of clearly articulating their desire to promote a healthy and sustainable community – environmentally, socially and fiscally – through the preservation of open space. The sections below outline the various open space planning efforts currently being practiced/implemented in the Flagstaff Region.

Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan

The *Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan* (OSGWP) was adopted in 1998 as an interagency effort to provide guidance in protecting and preserving existing open spaces in the Flagstaff region. Participating agencies included the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Arizona State Land Department, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Coconino National Forest, and the National Park Service, as well as numerous citizens and local organizations interested in preserving the character of the community. Among other things, OSGW classifies open space into a hierarchy of five open space categories. The five categories are briefly summarized below.

OSGWP Open Space Categories:

- 1. Primitive** – exhibits natural conditions with little evidence of current human activities; many unique and significant features, e.g. highest mountains, deepest canyons; helps define a sense of place; key wildlife habitat; restricted non-motorized access; very wild; wilderness areas.
- 2. Semi-primitive** – some evidence of past human activities, but substantially natural-appearing conditions; key or high quality wildlife habitat; restricted access/primitive roads & trails, high clearance vehicles; scenic vistas and prominent landscape features.
- 3. Multiple-use/Conservation** – appear natural but show some evidence of past human activities; forests & grasslands; high quality wildlife habitat; often accessible by two-wheel drive vehicles; economic uses include wood products, grazing, outfitting; variety of recreational uses; moderate to high levels of use.
- 4. Neighborwoods** – open spaces near residential areas; easily accessible for after-work recreational activities, e.g. hiking, biking, horseback riding; highly accessible; high level of use; many social trails; recreational use by default rather than planned management.
- 5. Cultural/Historical/Recreational** – highly modified by human facilities; developed recreation sites; combination of natural and modified landscapes; examples are Arizona Snowbowl and Fort Tuthill County Park; highly accessible to all modes of travel; high visitor use. **Also includes less-disturbed cultural resources, such as Picture Canyon and Elden Homestead site and grave.**

A collaborative open space planning group may consider the spatial relationships of these open space categories, as proximity and edge effects affect the quality of the more natural open space categories. The open space planning group will want to develop an assessment process in which priorities for restoration of natural conditions and species can be established.

Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan (OSGWP), Implementation 1998 – 2010

Some of the OSGWP accomplishments include the expansion of Fort Tuthill County Park with an acquisition of State Trust Land; the preservation of the Dry Lake caldera and conveyance of the land to the Forest Service; the County acquisition and preservation of rare wetlands at Kachina Village; and most recently, the County acquisition of State Trust Lands at Rogers Lake. Significant progress has been made toward the preservation of Picture Canyon, and a joint U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service study is underway to determine future management options for the greater Walnut Canyon area. The City and County have both developed funding mechanisms to support the acquisition and development of parks, trails, and open space projects. All of the agencies involved in developing the OSGW Plan, including the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Arizona State Land Department,

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Arizona Game and Fish, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Coconino National Forest, and the National Park Service, continue to work together to accomplish the goals and objectives of the OSGW Plan.²

Given the fact that the city has the potential for rapid growth, and that some public land close-in to the urbanized areas of the city may eventually transfer to private ownership, it becomes apparent that much of the city's perceived open space is only temporary in nature. The development process of infilling inevitably leads to pressures on what is perceived as open space within the urbanized areas. In many cases, vacant by-passed lands inside the city are considered and perceived as open space by city residents and travelers simply because they have not yet been developed. Under this tenuous set of circumstances, it is imperative that the City continue with the programs of preserving quality open space within the urban areas of the city, building upon the framework established by the Open Spaces and Greenways Plan through Regional Plan policies.

Coconino County Comprehensive Plan

Coconino County's Comprehensive Plan is a conservation-based planning document built upon a conservation framework and ecological principles. "The principles and guidelines in this framework are based on the premise that humans are integral components of the ecosystem and that we play a crucial role in shaping our environments. Since we are a part of nature and our actions affect the health and vitality of ecosystems, we are responsible for proper stewardship of natural areas." "Humans have the ability to understand these ecosystems through science and to apply this understanding to protect the natural world. Ultimately, humans reap the rewards of conservation actions." "See page 84/85. The Coconino County Comprehensive Plan will be coordinated with the updated Regional Plan policies with an amendment. Coordinated open space planning between the County and City is considered a priority, and will simplify the amendment process.

Arizona Game and Fish (AZGFD)

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is proactive in developing and implementing the Arizona State Wildlife Action Plan (2005-2015), the Coconino County Wildlife Linkages Report (March 2011)³ and the Interagency Management Plan for Gunnison's Prairie Dogs⁴. These plans were developed on the premise that the most effective way to conserve rare, declining and common wildlife is to restore and conserve healthy areas to live. Consequently, the action plan focuses on habitat types and riparian systems. The wildlife corridors, habitat areas and watchable wildlife sites, as established by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, is an important layer within the Regional Plan open space planning maps.

Coconino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

This plan is required by the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and takes into consideration all lands administered by the US Forest Service within the Regional Plan's boundaries, including such popular areas as the Snowbowl area and the Lake Mary Ecosystem. The plan considers, among a number of environmental concerns, wildlife habitat and riparian waterways.⁵ The existing plan, signed in 1987 and amended many times since, is currently undergoing comprehensive revision with finalization of a new plan anticipated in late 2012. The Coconino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan should be coordinated with Regional Plan open space and recreation planning policies.

Naval Observatory Station Flagstaff Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan

Established in 1955 a few miles west of Flagstaff, Arizona, the Flagstaff station is the US Naval Observatory's⁶ dark-sky site for optical and near-infrared astronomy. As a federal management plan, this document requires input and concurrence from the US Fish and Wildlife Services and the Arizona Game

² To resource the full plan, please see: [Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan](#) (1998) and OSGW [MAPS](#)

³ <http://www.flagstaff.az.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=13448>

⁴ <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/other-info/G-Prairie-Dog-Interagency-Mgmt-Plan-2007.pdf>

⁵ Gist, J. *Wildlife Quick Reference Guide for the Flagstaff Regional Planning Area*. March 2009. AZ Game & Fish.

⁶ <http://www.nofs.navy.mil/>

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& Fish Department.⁷ The needs of the Observatory's, both Naval and Lowell, are highly respected in open space planning.

Tools for Open Space Planning, Acquisition and Conservation

A number of different tools can be used to pro-actively implement the Urban and Rural Open Space Plans within the Regional Plan. The following outlines existing and potential tools for accomplishing this.

- 1. Conservation easements:** Conservation easements offer a powerful tool to legally protect land from development; and are used throughout the United States to permanently shield land from subdivision and development. The use of conservation easements has successfully protected millions of acres of wildlife habitat, working agriculture lands and open space, keeping land in an open condition that has shown to provide significant public benefits. A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally binding agreement that limits certain types of uses, including subdivision and prevents development from taking place on a piece of property now and in the future, while protecting the property's ecological services and open-space values. Conservation easements can be held by a private non-profit land trust or a governmental agency. Conservation easements can be purchased or private landowners can donate the value of the conservation easement to a qualified organization in return for benefits with respect to income and estate taxes; some states offer state tax credits to further incentivize land conservation.⁸
- 2. Open Space Acquisitions - Coconino County:** In 2002 voters of Coconino County approved the **Coconino Parks & Open Space Tax (CPOS)** that is funded with a 1/8 of 1 cent sales tax. Collection of these revenues will continue until the fund reaches \$33 million. The voters overwhelmingly supported this ballot measure that costs approximately \$1.63/month per person to support the acquisition of open space, redevelop existing County parks and develop new parks—all considered open space for this plan. Since 2002, over 2300 acres of open space has been acquired for County Natural Area Parks at Pumphouse and Rogers Lake. In addition, new park development has been completed at Louise Yellowman County Park in Tuba City, Sawmill Multicultural & Nature County Park in Flagstaff, and for The Pine Mountain Amphitheater at Ft. Tuthill County Park along with redevelopment of Raymond County Park at Kachina Village. Several park projects and two open space projects located on State Trust Lands remain to be completed; the Old Growth Forest adjacent to the U.S. Naval Observatory and on Observatory Mesa both of which are within the FMPO boundary for this plan. In order to engage in future open space acquisitions consideration should be given to a reauthorization of the CPOS tax requiring voter support and approval by 2014.
- 3. Open Space Acquisitions - City of Flagstaff:** In 2004, Flagstaff voters authorized spending up to **\$7.6 million on a bond issue** for "Neighborhood Open Space and FUTS Land Acquisition" over a 10-year period (2004-2014). To date, \$2.4 million has been allocated by the City. The Open Space Commission identifies and recommends land acquisition to City Council, and submitted an "Open Space Acquisition" plan to City Council in 2008. The first two parcels acquired were additional Thorpe Park land and 20 acres around Hoffman Tank, an identified wildlife corridor. Reauthorization of bond financing for open space acquisition would require voter approval in 2014.
- 4. Conservation financing:** The financing mechanisms mentioned above, a parks and open space sales tax and a municipal bond for acquisition funds, are two ways to finance public investment in open space. Other financing mechanisms to consider are Arizona Growing Smarter Grants, Development Impact Fees, and/or Infrastructure Financing District. A number of financing opportunities may need to be combined to acquire, preserve and manage the desired open space and trail system.
- 5. Purchase of Development Rights:** The ownership of land may be considered to be the possession of a "bundle of rights" associated with that land. These rights include the right to possess, use, modify,

⁷ Gist, J. *Wildlife Quick Reference Guide for the Flagstaff Regional Planning Area*. March 2009. AZ Game & Fish.

⁸ <http://www.conservationtaxcenter.org> ;

<http://www.nature.org/aboutus/howwework/conservationmethods/privatelands/conservationeasements/>

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develop, lease, or sell the land. Mineral rights constitute one of the items in the bundle with which most people are aware. If the mineral rights have been separated from the remaining items in the bundle, the owner is prohibited from drilling for oil or from mining the land. The right to develop a piece of land for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes is also a right within the bundle. The purchase of development rights involves the voluntary sale of that right while leaving all the remaining rights as before. The purchase may be made by a non-profit land trust or local government, which makes an offer to a landowner to buy the development rights on the parcel. Once an agreement is made, a permanent deed restriction is placed on the property which restricts the type of activities that may take place on the land in perpetuity. In this way, the parcel remains as agricultural or as open (green) space forever.

6. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): Arizona State law allows development rights to be transferred between land parcels in certain conditions. The development rights, as discussed above, are transferred FROM a parcel in which development is NOT desired, to a parcel in which development is desired and will increase the development rights on the RECEIVING end. TDR works as follows: developers in urban “receiving” areas buy development rights to land in rural “sending” areas; the transfer of rights allows the developers to increase the density of their developments. Development of the “sending” land is prohibited through an easement granted to the local government, but the landowner retains ownership, including the right to use the land for such open space purposes as farming and forestry.

7. Zoning: Once a parcel is purchased, traded or donated for open space in the City, a zoning change to PLF status needs to recognize the new designation. **PLF:** The Public Lands Forest (PLF) Zone applies to areas of the City designated as National Forest, state, county, and municipal permanent open space/preserve lands. This Zone is intended to promote the management and preservation of habitat types which are part of the unique environment characteristics of the City.

8. Green Infrastructure – A clearly articulated map in which open space, parks, recreation, trails, environmental conservation areas, wildlife corridors and habitats and water ways are overlaid so that the inter-relation is known as the region’s ‘green infrastructure’. This could also be the pre-cursor to a ‘Conservation Land System’.

9. Conservation Land System (CLS) -is a set of lands managed or set aside for conservation purposes. A CLS can use a Science Technical Advisory Team to identify areas of biological, cultural, and historical significance that are most important for conservation. This can include habitat for wildlife species of concern, sensitive plant communities, riparian areas, archaeological sites, and working farms and ranches. Conservation can be achieved through a variety of means including acquisition, conservation easement, transfer of development rights, conservation-based ordinances and guidelines, and intergovernmental agreements. A CLS can benefit private land owners by providing options when a land owner has elected to sell their property. Pima County has a CLS that they have adopted into their regional plan and it guides land use and open space acquisition for the county.⁹

10. Acquisition and preservation by community partners: Cooperation among partners including government agencies and non-profits such as Grand Canyon Trust; Central Arizona Land Trust; Friends of Walnut Canyon; Picture Canyon Core Group; Friends of Coconino County Parks, Friends of the Rio, Friends of Flagstaff’s Future, Habitat Harmony, and Friends of Northern Arizona Forests can result in effective conservation measures and maximum optimization of all conservation options. A Land Trust to management conservation lands currently does not exist in the Northern Arizona Region. The Diablo Trust exists to protect and collaborate efforts with existing ranch lands; a Central Arizona Land Trust exists, and could possibly be called upon to advise or even act as an interim manager, if the community so decides.¹⁰

⁹ <http://www.sonorandesert.org/learning-more/conservation-land-system>

¹⁰ <http://www.centralazlandtrust.org/>

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4. Rural Open Spaces

From 2001 Regional Plan: “The Rural Open Spaces Plan (Map 6), which addresses the area within the FMPO boundary beyond the city limits, is part of a larger master plan, the *Greater Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan (OSGWP) January 1998*, principal guide for open spaces. Both of these plans are intended to provide guidance in protecting and preserving existing open spaces with the demands of urban growth. In 1997, a memorandum of understanding was entered into by the agencies that prepared the *Greater Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan*; specifically, the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Arizona State Land Department. They agreed to consider to using the *OSGWP* in their land use management practices. The plan encompasses a study area of 578,000 acres that includes the FMPO, and makes recommendations for agencies to consider during their own planning. The plan, adopted by the City of Flagstaff and Coconino County in 1998, has become a key component of the region-wide growth management process in determining growth boundaries. Areas of high or low retention for open space are identified in the *OSGWP*, as well as desired future conditions for lands that were considered to be below their full potential at the time the *OSGWP* was written. This concept of retention areas serves as the basis of the *Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan* for defining those lands that should be preserved versus lands where urban expansion can occur. The primary goal of the *OSGWP*, and thus, the Rural Open Spaces Plan, is to maintain Flagstaff’s quality of life by finding ways to balance development with the retention of open spaces and natural areas. The value and objectives of open space and greenways are defined in both the *OSGWP* and the Rural Open Spaces Plans to be the following.

- Community identity
- Contained and directed growth and development
- Non-motorized transportation corridors
- Recreational opportunities
- Scenic quality
- Wildlife movement corridors
- Wildlife habitat
- Water and air quality
- Flood control

The *OSGWP* recognizes an open space greenbelt area that surrounds and connects with the City of Flagstaff and was initially established in the City’s *Growth Management Guide 2000*. The open space greenbelt is the foundation for the development of the Urban Open Spaces Plan and is thereby incorporated into the Regional Open Spaces Plan. The area includes significant hillsides and drainageways within the city. Wildlife movement corridors are important to protecting wildlife migration patterns that sustain feeding and breeding activities for wildlife existence. These corridors, along with key and high quality habitat areas, are shown on the Rural Open Spaces Plan, in addition to the open space designations, and are derived from the *OSGWP*. Linkages along open space corridors are shown on the Rural Open Spaces Plan by indicating the regional trail system, which currently consists entirely of U.S. Forest Service trails. These trails often link with the Flagstaff Urban Trails System. These linkages are shown both in terms of existing and proposed connections.”

The Arizona Preserve Initiative is designed to encourage the preservation of select parcels of State Trust Land in and around urban areas for open space to benefit future generations. The law lays out a process by which State Trust Lands can be leased for up to 50 years or sold for conservation purposes. Leases and sales must both occur at a public auction. In 2001/2002 both the City and Coconino County submitted applications to petition the State Land Department to reclassify certain State Trust Lands within the FMPO boundary at Walnut Canyon, Picture Canyon, Observatory Mesa, Old Growth Forest, Rogers Lake, and Ft. Tuthill for eventual acquisition through the Arizona Preserve Initiative. These are identified on the Green Spaces Inventory maps. <http://www.flagstaff.az.gov/index.aspx?NID=2035&ART=6107&admin=1> In 2010 Rogers Lake was acquired by Coconino County Parks and Recreation through this process, which proved to be a time-consuming task.

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5. Urban Open Space

From 2001 Regional Plan: “The Urban Open Spaces Plan attempts to create an expansive, well-functioning open space system by combining public and quasi-public open space wherever reasonably possible and by encouraging appropriate and controlled integration of significant private open space within the city limits. All components are combined to form a continuous, linked system.” Within the system are logical urban transects (areas of different uses and densities) which **support and are** supported by this ‘green infrastructure’ system of open spaces, trails, parks and greenways. “The Urban Open Spaces Plan acknowledges the following functions in designating open space and corridors:

- Preservation of significant natural areas characterized by unusual terrain, scenic vistas, unique geologic formations, dense or unique vegetation, or wildlife habitat.
- The greenbelt principle; that is, the use of linear open space to define and control urban development.
- Preservation of open space for recreational use such as hiking, skiing, bicycling, nature studies, and other similar uses.
- Utilization of open space lands to prevent encroachment into floodplains.
- Utilization of open space lands for retention of aesthetic and recreational values of such land in proximity to and within the city.
- Preservation of open space lands for future land use needs.
- Provision for a maximum of open space for common use, which simultaneously compensates in open space for compact building development.
- Utilization of open space lands as non-motorized transportation corridors between various land uses.
- Preservation of a ‘soft edge’ to the city.
- Preservation of wildlife corridors.

The Urban Open Spaces Plan identifies open space lands that fit the above functions, in addition to existing and proposed parks and schools that fit in as supplementary components to the whole system. Portions of the city’s significant hillsides and drainageways have been designated, including those of Observatory Mesa (Mars Hill), McMillan Mesa, the base of Mt. Elden and other foothills to the north; and the Rio de Flag, Bow and Arrow, Sinclair, and Switzer Canyon washes. In most cases involving drainageways, the open space areas reflect, at a minimum, the 100-year floodplain boundary. Change or reduction of the 100-year floodplain, either through engineering applications or more definitive flood data, may alter the amount of land designated as open space. In hillside areas, the width of the open space is conceptual, the intent being to retain as much as possible of the designated area in a natural state. Some open space areas may serve more than one purpose. A separate category designates storm detention areas with open space and park opportunities. Other areas included as open space include cemeteries, golf courses, interstate medians, as well as other miscellaneous areas that serve as critical buffers or links in the system.

National Forest and State Trust lands form a forested open space system that, for the most part, surrounds the city. The National Forest lands are open to the public for public use, while State Trust Lands are not open for public use. Yet, all of these lands ‘look’ like open space land. In all instances, the intention of this plan is to retain and/or create a system of pedestrian access to these public lands surrounding the city. The *OSGWP* recommends that this access for Flagstaff area communities to open spaces should be within 15 minutes of any given neighborhood. The Flagstaff Urban Trails System addresses this recommendation by providing access through trail corridors obtained by a series of implementation measures such as acquisitions or easements. These corridors are linked to corridors in the Rural Open Spaces Plan by either showing the continuation of these urban designations outside of the city limits or indicating an extension whose alignment has yet to be determined. Because conflicts might arise among the different functions of these corridors, a balance between the needs of people and wildlife will need to be achieved. Implementation of the Urban Open Spaces Plan will require that a multitude of approaches be further developed through this Regional Land Use Plan in conjunction with the Rural Open Spaces Plan and the *OSGWP*.”

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6. Goals, Policies and Suggested Strategies

Open Space GOAL

The region will have a system of open lands, such as natural areas, wildlife corridors and habitat areas, trails, and greenways to support the natural environment that sustains our quality of life, cultural heritage, and ecosystem health. [As approved by CAC 3/3/11]

Policy 1.1: Form and use the appropriate Stake Holders Group (federal, state, city, county, non-profit and interested citizens) for coordinated open space planning, acquisition, conservation and protection. [As approved by CAC 3/3/11]

Strategies for implementation:

- a. Use the guiding documents of the *Greater Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan*, the City of Flagstaff Urban Open Spaces Plan, and the City's *Long Range Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space*, and County Area Plans which have Open Space Objectives as the framework for the inter-agency group.
- b. Form the inter-agency institutional framework group.
- c. Use Inter-agency planning and acquisition for collaborative buying power. Ownership, operation and maintenance should center in a single entity.

Policy 1.2: A Green Infrastructure¹¹ facilitates non-motorized connectivity, preserves natural lands and priority open lands, and promotes opportunities for people to interact with nature. [As approved by CAC 4/7/11]

Strategies for implementation:

- a. The inventory, criteria and objectives should be used as part of an open spaces management program to acquire, protect, and manage properties and their resources and values.
- b. Map proposed open space 'connections', 'priority open lands' and 'Neighborhoods'.
- c. Priority open lands to consider as collaborative efforts for preservation will include Picture Canyon and Walnut Canyon.
- d. The FUTS Masterplan is one means of connection by open space and trails.
- e. Identify tools and clearly articulate legal means to acquire and maintain connections, priority open lands and neighborhoods.
- f. All subdivision applications be assessed for open space and recreational amenities (parks, open space and trails) within walking distance of project; either provided within subdivision or already in close proximity.
- g. Permit recreational use of regional open space lands where it is consistent with the Land Use Plan and other policies.

Policy 1.3: Preserve the rural character and protect the natural environment of the region. [To be discussed by CAC 5/5/11] **Suggestion: Open Spaces may serve as natural environment buffer zones to protect scenic views and roadways, to separate disparate uses, and by separating private development from public lands, scenic by-ways and wildlife habitats.**

Strategies for implementation:

- a. Open Space buffers can be used to protect the character of major corridors.
- b. Open Space buffers can be used to separate disparate uses such as residential areas, commercial areas and highways.

¹¹ Green Infrastructure – A clearly articulated map in which open space, parks, recreation, trails, environmental conservation areas, wildlife corridors and habitats and water ways are overlaid so that the inter-relation is known as the region's 'green infrastructure'.

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- c. Identify and give examples of ‘scenic views’ and ‘scenic roadways’ to protect, such as Fort Valley Corridor’s views, ridgelines, and ‘green’ setbacks.

Policy 1.4: *Suggestion:* **Recognize the importance and protect where possible the natural aspects of open spaces.** *[To be discussed by CAC 5/5/11]*

Strategies for implementation:

- a. Municipal and county owned open space parcels should be inventoried and classified as to specific natural quality they exhibit.
- b. Development of municipal and county owned undeveloped parcels must consider preservation of its natural qualities.
- c. Open spaces preserved in the process of the development of undeveloped lands should consider preservation of its special natural qualities as listed in the Open Space Goal statement.

Policy 1.5: Promote the development a ‘**Conservation Land System**’ (CLS) as a means to inventory, map and prioritize and manage the ‘green infrastructure’ for the region.

Suggestion: **Establish a Conservation Land System^{12 13}(CLS) to inventory, map, and manage the region’s “green infrastructure”.** *[To be discussed by CAC 5/5/11]*

Strategies for implementation:

- a. Clearly map and articulate the ‘green infrastructure’ as a means to establish a Conservation Land System.
- b. Use the (inter-agency) Open Space Stakeholders Group to inventory and prioritize all open spaces, including Federal lands, public and privately held, in the planning area. The Stakeholders Group will ascertain the values to prioritize, along with scientific data, and provide a comprehensive implementation tool kit.
- c. Utilize implementation tools through local, state and federal jurisdictions.

¹² **Conservation Land System** is a process of identifying areas of biological, cultural, and historical significance that are most important for conservation. This can include habitat for wildlife species of concern, sensitive plant communities, riparian areas, archaeological sites, working ranchlands, etc. Conservation can be achieved through a variety of means, including acquisition, conservation easement, transfer of development rights, conservation-based ordinances and guidelines, and intergovernmental agreements. *(From Regional Plan Environmental Conservation Element DRAFT, 2011)*

¹³ As expressed in the *Coconino County Comprehensive Plan’s* vision statement, we desire thriving communities and viable economies that exist in harmony with our unique natural environment. The **CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK** explains why and how conservation-based planning can help achieve this goal. Developed with assistance of an independent Science Advisory Group, this framework provides the context for the plan’s **GOALS** and **POLICIES** by detailing relevant scientific **PRINCIPLES** and **GUIDELINES** and explaining their importance to the planning process. By more fully integrating **CONSERVATION** and **DEVELOPMENT**, the *Comprehensive Plan* seeks to ensure that planning decisions meet human needs while maintaining the county’s ecological integrity. This Conservation Framework can help developers and residents understand the criteria County planners use in reviewing proposed development projects.

http://www.coconino.az.gov/uploadedFiles/Community_Development/TheConservationFramework.pdf

Flagstaff Regional Plan – DRAFT OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

7. Stakeholders and Implementation

Stakeholders: There are many stakeholders interested in and committed to open space planning, acquisition, management and preservation, for various reasons. This list is not exhaustive, and highlights the partnership potential in the Flagstaff Region.

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Arizona State Land Department

Arizona Game & Fish

Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization (FUTS, LOOP and AZ Trails)

Coconino County (*Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commission*)

City of Flagstaff (*Open Space Commission*)

Friends of the Rio

Friends of Walnut Canyon

Picture Canyon Core Group